

**Recap of January 21, 2004, Meeting  
Government Access and Information Committee  
12:00pm Room 206 County/City Building**

**Attendees:** Rod Armstrong, James Lamphere, Jim Langtry, Trish Owen, Brian Pillard, Doug Thomas, Don Herz, Terry Lowe, David Jane'

**Approval of Minutes,**

*There was a quorum and December meeting minutes were approved.*

**Statistics,**

*Statistics tables have been changed back into two tables with six months of stats per table. This makes them easier to read and print.*

*Hits are back up and all the activity is stabilizing around the five million mark. November had a small number of working days, only 17, which is part of the reason hits were low in November.*

**ePayments:**

*There was a gross of \$340,000 and a net of \$337,000 collected in Real Estate Taxes, which is the largest amount collected. 85 people used ePayment module to pay their Real Estate Taxes. Total net collections for the month were \$363,000, \$25,000 came in from the other payment types. The amount collected each month in water and sewer payments has remained steady. The amount for this month was \$14,000. This month there was 149 water payments processed which is an all time high. Normally, there are about 110 water/sewer payments. There were 344 parking tickets processed which totaled \$7,000, this is an average amount. In the last four months, parking tickets paid totaled \$6,800, \$6,900, \$7,000 and \$7,100. There has been a 40% increase in people using the ePay option to pay their parking tickets in the last year. 7% of total parking tickets paid are paid on-line. Terry feels that 10% is what we want and if we dive people there 20% would be an even better number. Parking tickets has the highest e-payments percentage of all online payments. The annualized numbers had over 12 thousand units of work completed online. Terry does not know what 12 thousand units of work would have taken a human to complete but it would have been something. At some point it would be great if we had 20 thousand units of work. The website address is printed on the tickets and water billing has a brochure that advertises the online payment option. Terry received an email asking if there was anything more that could be done to encourage people to pay online. Project Partners are coming up and we will begin to do more advertising of online payment options. One of the things that is not reflected in these numbers because it does not generate revenue, is accident reports. Providing accident reports online saves the Police Department a lot of time. There is a tremendous amount of self-service work going on, with accident reports, property tax look-ups, and Contractor Permit look-ups for Building & Safety. We have not contacted the bank about a possible adjustment in fees and we feel it is best to leave it alone until they contact us. The only addendum we have had is with the addition of Criminal Histories.*

*The Treasurer (State) is ready to roll out electronic check processing and the processing fees for this are a flat rate. When you pass the fees on, there is epay contract language with the bank that says that we cannot charge more for a visa payment than an electronic check payment, the fees have to be the same. From a fiscal standpoint, for the Criminal Histories, the fee is being absorbed, it is \$10 whether you come in or do it on line. The \$1 comes out of the net that goes to the General Fund. They had hoped to have a little more activity then they have had to off set the \$1 fee they are absorbing. Criminal History checks are averaging 400-500 (\$4,000-\$5,000) per month. They originally estimated \$1,200-\$1,500 per month. He thought LPS would use it a lot however, it turns*

*out they do not have credit card capabilities. We have a master contract with Wells Fargo that does all of the back office processing for us and Terry is afraid that if we try to do something like add electronic checks it would cause some problems. Currently, when we have a new application, we can just put an addendum on the contract and it then becomes part of the existing contract. We do not have to go out and rebid it. We have contracted with Wells Fargo to do all the settling, we do not charge a credit card fee, it is a bank fee. We have no liability.*

*There is a difference between a credit card check and an electronic check payment. With a credit card you immediately verify that it is an active account and has an available balance but with an electronic check, you immediately verify that it is a valid account and routing number but it does not check to see if there are funds in the account so it can still "bounce". The State prefers people use their credit/debit card. It does not cost as much in processing fees for the bank if people use their debit cards.*

*With regards to paying your electric bill online, the code has been written for LES and we have tried getting them to go on line but they have not chosen to go with this option.*

#### **404 Errors:**

*Our 404 errors are down to 27,000 which is the lowest they have been in sometime. There are always going to be a certain number of 404 errors due to outside links. I.S. handles the most of the County side and we could make an effort to run the report that shows what pages the broken links are on. When David is working on a page and finds a bad link he normally emails the web assistant to have them fix it. Doug has asked David to run Zenu, to check for broken links and distribute it out to the group. The issue is, we can try to get someone temporally to clean it up. There are ways that the web assistants can check the external links. The real issue is whether they will remember to check them or if they will remember how to check them. They can run Zenu anytime they put a new page out and you can use Google to check some of your site maintenance, as far as outside links. If links were checked before pages are put in production, the number for 404 errors could be reduced to 10,000 or so. We are hoping the template processing is helping to cleanup the 404 errors.*

#### **Cross Promotional Contracts:**

*These contracts were signed and sent to the City Attorney's office. As soon as they are done, they will be sent onto the Mayor's Office for EO's. We have targeted February to be the beginning of the advertising campaign and bringing out the new URL's. We have the ability to record something now for TV and radio but it is hard to record another spot for TV if in a few months something new comes up. It is harder to record a second TV spot because the contracts states it is their design studios that will produce all materials. What the TV station likes to do is run this continual filler type thing and we just sent them a new script for that. On TV it is really on their time line. Last time, we used it for Desktop alert because the advertising seconds were not being used. We get only so many seconds to run so many times a day and once we use them they are gone. On the contract they are only obligated to do one main ad and runners that can be modified every four months or so.*

#### **California-New Citizen Service Center:**

*California now has a new Citizen service center where there is a body for phone support. We could do something like this but it would take at least one person to man the phone. This was an extension of the call center, problem resolution center. The useful thing is to help people find information on the site. The goal is to develop a site in which people do not need to have help getting through the pages/services.*

*Having 802 wireless sites, like at the Hay Market, would give people internet connectivity outside,*

*like bigger cities have. If you can get corporate sponsorship, it would be great.*

#### **Web Advisory Committee:**

*This committee has not met since they decided on the URL's to use in promotional materials. The URL's decided on are Lincoln.ne.gov and Lancaster.ne.gov. For advertising, they are going to use both URL's. They are short and easy to remember and you do not have to put www in front for it. There are 5 or 6 URL's that will get you to the InterLinc Homepage.*

#### **Appointments:**

*Doug has talked with Corrie in the Mayor's Office, and she is in the process of doing the paper work for the appointments. Doug talked to her about our new members and she is going to take care of all this.*

#### **Tiered Service:**

*Dave was going to talk to Norm about tiered service. Norm did not want to go back and redact all the images that are out there. There is a lot of private information in the records that could cause a problem if the legislature enacts legislation classifying some of the information now available as private. When Norm is directed by the legislature to do something, he will have to deal with it then. Jim Lamphere said he was waiting for the first lawsuit from someone whose identity was stolen and says that an agency knew about this for years and did not do anything about it. It may not be in Lincoln, or Lancaster County, but he feels it is bound to happen. Norm's thinking is why should he restrict it on the internet when you can walk in the door and get the same information and this is the County Attorney's position as well. The questions raised is what liability does the government have when an attorney brings this lawsuit before a law restricting the information available is passed. Terry thought this was protected under the Public Information law, these things are often decided in court and until someone files a suit, it is not decided. One of the things we have talked to Norm about is pulling the name search off, so you would have to search by address or parcel ID and he does not want to do that because then people will start calling his office and ask for the parcel ID. The County Attorney says we cannot have two tiered service. There were two bills in the legislature last year that did not get passed but that could easily make it through in the next session.*

#### **Next Meeting.**

*February 18, 2004*